

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached replacement sheets of drawings include changes to FIGS. 2, 5 and 6 and replace the original sheets including FIGS. 2, 5 and 6.

In Figure 2, the changes include amending a redundant reference 24c to 24e and adding reference 12c.

In Figure 5, the changes include amending "Pluggin Module" 115 to "Plug-in Modules" 115 and "Server" 116 to "Services" 116.

In Figure 6, the changes include amending "Account Intro." 148 to "Account Info." 148 and "Resourcs ID(s)" 140 to "Resource ID(s)" 140.

Attachments following last page of this Amendment:

Replacement Sheets (3 pages)

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 17 and 19 to 20 are pending in this application; of which, claims 1, 19 and 20 are the independent claims. Claims 18 and 21 to 22 are cancelled without prejudice. Favorable reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 6, 8 to 11 and 17 to 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Stone et al. (U.S. Patent Number 6,421,737 hereinafter "Stone") in view of Wilson et al. (U.S. Patent Number 6,714,976 hereinafter "Wilson").

Amended claim 1 is directed to a method of managing hardware resources. The method includes providing an executable software module configured to communicate with the hardware resources and operating the executable software module to cause the executable software module to return information about the hardware resources. The information includes hardware configuration information associated with hardware resources and customer information associated with customers of the hardware resources. The customer information includes network addresses of the customers, allocation information indicative of allocations of the hardware resources to the customers and billable event information for use by a billing application to bill the customers and indicative of usage of the hardware resources by the customers. The method also includes storing the hardware configuration information and the customer information in a database.

The applied art is not understood to disclose or to suggest the foregoing features of claim 1. In particular, neither Stone nor Wilson disclose or suggest operating an executable software module to cause the executable software module to return customer information,

associated with customers of hardware resources, which includes network addresses of the customers, allocation information indicative of allocations of the hardware resources to the customers and billable event information for use by a billing application to bill the customers and indicative of usage of the hardware resources by the customers (see, for example, page 11, lines 19 to 26 and FIG. 6 of Applicants' Specification).

Stone relates to monitoring selected resources in a computer system by using resource monitor modules 11-14 (see Abstract and FIG. 1 of Stone). Stone discloses a resource monitor manager 15 that receives information from the resource monitor modules (see column 6, lines 10 to 22 of Stone). However, Stone does not disclose customer information much less customer information which includes network addresses of the customers, allocation information indicative of allocations of the hardware resources to the customers and billable event information for use by a billing application to bill the customers and indicative of usage of the hardware resources by the customers.

Wilson discloses a system for automated monitoring and management of distributed applications, client/server databases network, networks and systems across heterogeneous environments (see Abstract of Wilson). Wilson discloses a database repository for maintaining configuration and usage information (see column 10, lines 7 to 33 of Wilson). However, Wilson does not specify customer information much less customer information which includes network addresses of the customers, allocation information indicative of allocations of the hardware resources to the customers and billable event information for use by a billing application to bill the customers and indicative of usage of the hardware resources by the customers.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons indicated above, even if Stone were combined with Wilson, the resulting hypothetical combination would not disclose or suggest operating an executable software module to cause the executable software module to return customer information, associated with customers of the hardware resources, which includes network addresses of the customers, allocation information indicative of allocations of the hardware resources to the customers and billable event information for use by a billing application to bill the customers and indicative of usage of the hardware resources by the customers. For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully request that the Stone and Wilson references should be withdrawn.

Independent claim 19 is a computer product claim and independent claim 20 is a system claim, each having features corresponding to claim 1. Applicants submit that the Stone and Wilson references should also be withdrawn with respect to claims 19 and 20 for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Applicants submit that all dependent claims now depend on allowable independent claims.

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for withdrawing the prior art cited with regards to any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as

specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

Applicants submit that the entire application is now in condition for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

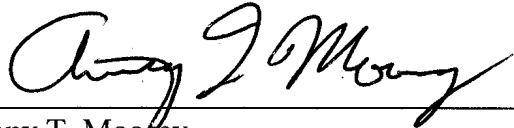
All correspondence should be directed to the address below. Applicants' attorney can be reached by telephone at (781) 401-9988 ext. 23.

Enclosed is an electronic payment for the Request for Continued Examination. No other fee is believed to be due for this Response; however, if any other fees are due, please apply such fees to Deposit Account No. 50-0845 referencing Attorney Docket: EMC-033PUS.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: _____

September 7, 2006



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